2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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251 drying—a process which is believed to destroy the vitamin content of vegetables.[1]

Gourds, fruit, &c. Gourds may be kept a few months, but not pumpkins. I once saw a small temporary granary of *mpundu* fruit, but I think this is very rare.

Roots, mushrooms, &c. Sweet potatoes, mushrooms, and caterpillars are preserved by a process of parboiling (*ukufubula*) and subsequent drying in the sun. These foods are used during the hunger months but are declared to be insipid.

Cassava is not stored, but eaten from the beds as wanted.

Meat and fish are not preserved in large quantities, because the supply is very scanty, but in each case the raw flesh is smoke-dried [438] over the open fire. There is some trade in dried fish preserved in this way.

Granaries and Storing Vessels

343 The approach to a Bemba village is usually up a narrow, over-
361 grown path, winding through untidy beds of pumpkins, beans, or
[487] maize. On the outskirts, the first buildings that catch the eye are the village granaries—lath and plaster cylinders with thatched roofs ranged in an irregular circle round the dwelling places.
343 These grain bins are of varying sizes, but measure usually about 10 feet high and 20 feet in circumference, and are raised on uprights about a foot from the ground. Each granary stands as near as possible to its owner's hut, the majority round the outside of the village, but a few scattered here and there inside. To European eyes, they are often untidy and inefficient looking constructions. The supports are sometimes unevenly placed, so that the whole
[531] structure seems to tilt to one side. The walls may be whitewashed and painted with red, yellow, and black earth, but more often they are just roughly daubed with clay which cracks in the sun. The grass used for thatching is never cut evenly or bound round the edge, and therefore hangs in wisps of different lengths. But these granaries, though they do not conform to our artistic standards, are nevertheless the measure by which the prosperity of a village is very largely judged. Many huts with few grain bins mean few adult male householders in the community. Cracking walls, or

[1] Cf. the statement that the women of Nigeria dry their leaves in the shade in order to preserve their food value, quoted E. B. Worthington, 'Food and Nutrition of the African Native', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1936, p. 158.

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881 778 532 district although there is individual variation in their modelling, while others seem to be of local distribution. I made a collection of about forty-three myself, but think there are likely to be twice that number either made or still remembered in the Bemba country. Each of the pottery emblems has its name and its song.[1]

Larger models of unfired clay decorated with beans, soot, chalk and red dye, are also made in the chisungu hut during the ceremony, and destroyed the same evening. They include, for instance, an enormous snake the coils of which cover the whole floor, a figure of a man and a woman, and lion made of logs covered with clay and with a head of hair. These are also described as *mbusa*.

881 778 531 The second type of *mbusa* are the wall designs. These are rough designs painted on the inside of the initiation hut at a certain stage in the ceremony. Most of them are conventional patterns with names and secret interpretations. Nine of these designs were used in the ceremony I saw, but Brelsford has recorded twenty others.

881 778 The third type of emblem consists of small bundles of objects representing the domestic life of the Bemba, that is to say, essential food of the tribe, such as millet, sorghum, meat, dried fish and salt, as well as fire wood, snuff and the red camwood dye known as *nkula*. Certain groups of trees used in the ceremony are also known as *mbusa*.

THE CEREMONY

881 361 The chisungu ceremony that I attended started at Cisonde village near Chinsali on June 1st, 1931. Chinsali is a Government station. It consisted at the time of two European officials' houses,

[1] H. Cory has collected many hundreds of these figurines from Tanganyika tribes. His book, shortly to be published, gives an account of their distribution, together with a number of illustrations. See also his 'Figurines used in the initiation ceremonies of the Nguu of Tanganyika', *Africa*, vol. XIV, No. 8, 1944. The Venda, Lovedu, and Vandau of Portuguese East Africa also use figurines. Schofield considers the Bemba figures similar to the pottery images found at Zimbabwe, cf. 'Pottery images or mbusa used at the chisungu of the Bemba people of North-Eastern Rhodesia', *South African Journal of Science*, vol. XLI, Feb. 1945.

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which was to warn her not to finish up her granary at once like the hawk pouncing on food.

I left the hut at half past eleven at night but the dancing went on till half past three, and there was desultory singing till the cock crew.

The women then tasted the stew made of the seeds cooked in the *namushimwa* pot and drifted away to their homes. The *banacisungu* were told not to sleep, but to go out and fetch more clay for the modelling to be done during the day.

EIGHTH DAY

Painting the hut designs

The following day was given to painting the special chisungu designs on the walls of the huts. Nine separate panels were painted with crude designs in white, red, chrome and black washes applied with grass brushes. Two of the younger women did the work with great concentration and determination but no one referred to the designs in my hearing in the forthcoming days: nor did they seem to be discussed or admired. The majority of the designs are conventional patterns and only 'the bird' and 'the leopard' (neither of which is illustrated) can be reckoned as representational art in any sense of the word.[1] The names of the designs are as follows (the first five are shown opposite page 112):

'the butterflies' (*cipelebushya*) red and black star design.

'the guinea-fowls' (*amakanga*) a conventional design.

'the eyes' (*amenso*) a highly stylized design.

'the owl' (*cipululu*) a conventional geometric design of black and red.

'the bean' (*cilemba*) another geometrical design.

'the birds' (*fyuni*) which is roughly representational.

'the *cimbulumbulu*', wavy lines of alternate red and black.

'the whitewash' (*lota*) a criss-cross of black and red lines.

'the fool' (*cipuba*) alternate wavy lines of black and red.

A circular patch was painted on the top of two contiguous panels. Each was said to belong to one of the girls.[2]

[1] The designs illustrated by Mr. V. W. Brelsford, *op. cit.*, are also conventional in character.

[2] Brelsford suggests that the circular dot represents the vagina of the girl, and in view of the shooting ceremony described on p. 107 this seems likely.

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The Ceremony

881 531 I have no full comments recorded on these designs. The young women present were too junior to reveal the secret of the names on their own responsibility and I omitted to get a comprehensive interpretation from those in charge. One *nacimbusa*, when pressed, took me out to the bush, completely out of hearing of the village. She looked round nervously and said: 'People call whitewash "*pemba*" but we women call the design "*lota*".' It was an old word, she said, from very long ago. Throughout the ceremony, the whitewash represents the washing away of the menstrual blood. It was sent to chiefs in the old days to announce the end of the chisungu ceremony of an important Bemba princess. The bean [831] design evidently had a sexual significance. Nangoshye said it was a parable (*mulumbe*) of manhood. The eye design was described as of teaching the girl submission. When her husband insults her and scolds her, she is to sit silent and merely raise her eyes at him. He will be ashamed and say, 'Indeed, you have done well,' (*mwawamya*). The wild guinea-fowl design has also apparently a [831] sexual meaning. It was to teach the girl to hold on hard. The *cimbulumbulu* was another name for a great *nacimbusa* of the past, referred to in song (No. 41) as Cibale. The owl is a name used for a stupid person who suddenly becomes clever. The girl is taught at initiation so that she becomes clever or educated. The fool has presumably the same interpretation as the model with that name described below on page 88. Another woman described it as a design to teach concealment. The girl should hide everything in her heart, all the things taught her.

I believe that these designs and their names can be reckoned as the most esoteric part of the chisungu. I think that the meanings I give are very superficial ones. I regret I did not give more time to discussing them with the *nacimbusa*.

881 In the evening began the first rite of handing over the designs to the girls. Each of them was pulled into the hut by Nangoshye and stood up against the wall under her own wall design. The drums began and the company started singing 'Take the girl to the crocodile' (No. 22).[1] Women shouted at her, 'Look what you have been given! Look at the lovely clothes your mother's brother

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* (A.C.). The crocodile represents wisdom and loyalty to the tribe. If a girl does not go through the ceremony she will not be loyal.

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so that there will be a lot of visitors and everyone will say the chisungu is a very good one indeed.'

The rest of the company had already returned exhausted to their homes.

TENTH DAY

The guinea-fowl

The next day was spent in the same laborious fashion. A stellate design covering the whole floor was modelled and covered with colour and seeds. It was described as the guinea-fowl design (*amakanga*) and appeared to be associated with agricultural fertility as in the case of the guinea-fowl dance described on page 71.

('It is to remind the girl not to forget her hoe, and that she is to go on giving the people food', said one of my best informants. The guinea-fowl is also a sexual symbol. (See page 81.))

Again the elaborate models were cleared away at night. Desultory drumming and dancing went on until late.

ELEVENTH DAY

The festive porridge eating (bwali bwa ukuangala)

I was called in the middle of the morning to see an enormous cooking-pot full of water being set on the fire in the hut of the mother of one of the girls. Ordinary porridge was to be made, but the cooking itself was a ritual act. The flour was first stirred in by Nangoshye, who then handed over the spoon to one of the girl's maternal relatives. When the meal was cooked the girl's maternal grandmother was called to dish up the porridge and to hide *mbusa* in it. She filled a great enamel basin with porridge served in the usual way, and then stuck on top of it a small rounded lump of the cooked meal filled with the domestic *mbusa* (tobacco, salt, beads, meat, red dye and a small lump of whitewash). The whole was then decorated with marrow seeds and red dye and carried to the chisungu hut. Here a similar bowl had been prepared by the mother of the second girl and it stood waiting with the accompanying relish beside it.

It was a day of offering and receiving offerings—from the girls' mothers to the *banacimbusa*; from the younger *nacimbusa* to the

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Painted designs on the walls of the hut showing, left to right: 1. 'Beans'; 2. 'The owl'; 3. 'The eyes'; 4. 'The wild goose'; 5. 'The butterflies' (See p. 80)

[facing p. 112]